

What is Claimed is:

1. An apparatus for dispensing a selectable number of tickets from a plurality of serially joined tickets, the apparatus including:

a platform on which the joined tickets are supported;

first roller means for engaging the joined tickets and advancing the tickets in a forward direction;

cutting means for cutting adjacent joined tickets along a cut line extending across the platform;

a controller housed in said platform and connected to said first roller means and said cutting means, said controller detachably coupled to an input device for allowing entry of a selected number of tickets to be dispensed; and,

detector means coupled to said controller, said detector means for detecting when adjacent joined tickets are on opposite sides of said cut line and providing information to said controller to enable the controller to count said selected number of tickets;

wherein said controller controls the first roller means and the cutting means to advance the joined tickets a distance in the forward direction commensurate with the selected number of tickets to be dispensed and cut the selected number of tickets from the joined tickets so that the selected number of tickets can be dispensed.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said detector means includes first and second sensors disposed on opposite sides of said cut line, and said first and second sensors detect the presence of markers disposed on adjacent joined tickets.

3. The apparatus according to claim 2 wherein said cutting means cuts at least one ticket from the joined tickets when moving in opposite directions along said cut line.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3 wherein said cutting means includes a rotatable cutting disc.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein said cutting disc is supported on a carriage mounted on a rail extending parallel to said cut line, said rail

disposed proximate said platform to assist in holding said joined tickets substantially flat against said platform.

6. The apparatus according to claim 5 further including holding means for holding the joined tickets substantially flat against the platform at a location proximate said detector means.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6 further including a ticket guide to constrain and guide said joined tickets from a supply of said joined tickets onto said platform, said ticket guide demountably coupled to the platform to allow interchanging of the ticket guide with at least one other ticket guide so as to accommodate joined tickets of different width.

8. A ticketing system including:

a supply of serially joined tickets, each ticket provided on one side with two spaced apart markers, each marker being located along the opposite edges of the ticket that are joined to opposite adjacent tickets; and,

an apparatus for dispensing a selectable number of said joined tickets, the apparatus including:

a platform on which the joined tickets are supported;

first roller means for engaging the joined tickets and advancing the tickets in a forward direction;

cutting means for cutting adjacent joined tickets along a cut line extending across said platform;

detector means supported on said platform for detecting when respective markers on adjacent joined tickets are located on opposite sides of said cut line; and,

a controller housed in said platform and connected to said first roller means, said cutting means and said detector means, said controller detachably coupled to an input device to allow entry of the selected number of tickets to be dispensed, said controller controlling the first roller means and the cutting means to advance the joined tickets a distance in the forward direction and cutting the selected number of tickets from the joined tickets, wherein said detector means provides a signal to the

controller to enable the controller to count a number of joined tickets advanced in the forward direction corresponding to the selected number of tickets to be dispensed.

9. An apparatus for dispensing a selectable number of tickets from a plurality of serially joined tickets, the apparatus including:

a platform on which the joined tickets are supported;

a roller configured to engage and advance the joined tickets in a forward direction;

a cutter aligned with said roller and said platform to cut adjacent joined tickets along a cut line extending across said platform;

a controller housed in said platform and coupled to said roller and said cutter, said controller further detachably coupled to an input device for allowing entry of a selected number of tickets to be dispensed; and,

a detector aligned with said platform to detect when adjacent joined tickets are on opposite sides of said cut line, said detector being coupled and providing information to said controller to enable said controller to count the selected number of tickets;

wherein said controller controls said roller and said cutter to advance the joined tickets a distance in the forward direction commensurate with the selected number of tickets to be dispensed and cut the selected number of tickets from the joined tickets so that the selected number of tickets can be dispensed.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9 wherein said detector includes first and second sensors disposed on opposite sides of said cut line, and said first and second sensors detect the presence of markers disposed on adjacent joined tickets.

11. The apparatus according to claim 9 wherein said cutter includes a rotatable cutting disc.

12. The apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said cutting disc is supported on a carriage mounted on a rail extending parallel to said cut line, said rail disposed proximate said platform to assist in holding said joined tickets substantially flat against said platform.

13. An apparatus for dispensing a selectable number of tickets from a plurality of serially joined tickets, the apparatus including:

a platform on which the joined tickets are supported;

a roller configured to engage and advance the joined tickets in a forward direction;

a cutter aligned with said platform to cut adjacent joined tickets along a cut line extending across said platform;

a controller housed in said platform and coupled to said roller and said cutter, said controller further detachably coupled to an input device for allowing entry of a selected number of tickets to be dispensed; and,

a detector aligned with said platform and acting on one side of said joined tickets to detect when adjacent joined tickets are on opposite sides of said cut line, said detector being coupled and providing information to said controller to enable said controller to count the selected number of tickets;

wherein said controller controls said roller and said cutter to advance the joined tickets a distance in the forward direction commensurate with the selected number of tickets to be dispensed and cut the selected number of tickets from the joined tickets so that the selected number of tickets can be dispensed.

14. The apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said detector includes first and second sensors disposed on opposite sides of said cut line, and said first and second sensors detect the presence of markers disposed on adjacent joined ticket.

15. The apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said cutter includes a rotatable cutting disc.

16. The apparatus according to claim 15 wherein said cutting disc is supported on a carriage mounted on a rail extending parallel to said cut line, said rail disposed proximate said platform to assist in holding said joined tickets substantially flat against said platform.

17. The apparatus according to claim 13 further including a foot for holding said joined tickets substantially flat against said platform at a location proximate said detector.

18. The apparatus according to claim 17 further including a ticket guide to constrain and guide said joined tickets from a supply of said joined tickets onto said platform, said ticket guide demountably coupled to said platform to allow interchanging of said ticket guide with at least one other ticket guide to accommodate joined tickets of different width.